CLAIMS

Please amend claim 22. Please cancel claims 1-21, 28-29, and 37-64. Please add new claims 65-85. A complete claim set follows.

1. – 21. (Canceled).

22. (Currently amended) A system for providing interactive advertising comprising:

    a content server for providing <u>video</u> programming <u>content and</u>
        <u>advertisements</u> to a user, ~~wherein the programming includes content~~
        ~~and advertisements,~~ each advertisement having an associated value
        <u>and displayed automatically to the user</u>~~, and the user is permitted to~~
        ~~select which of the advertisements are to be played~~;
    a programming database accessible by the content server, the
        programming database containing content and advertisements; and
    wherein the content server further awards the associated value to the user
        for each of the advertisements that are played.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22 wherein the content server provides programming to the user in response to a request from the user for the content contained in the programming.

24. (Original) The system of claim 22 wherein the content server transmits the content to the user via a computer network.

25. (Original) The system of claim 24 wherein the content server further comprises:

    a stream serving process for combining the content and the

advertisements into a single programming stream and transmitting the

single programming stream to the user via a computer network;

a client interaction process for determining which of the advertisements

are played; and

a billing cache for awarding value to the user according to which of the

advertisements are played.

26. (Original) The system of claim 25 wherein:

the single programming stream including blocks of content separated by

blocks of advertisements;

each block of advertisements being associated with a monetary amount;

and

the value awarded to the user includes the monetary amounts associated

with the blocks of advertisements that are played.

27. (Original) The system of claim 22 wherein:

advertisements are associated with credit amounts usable against fees

paid by the user for the programming; and

the value awarded to the user includes the credit amounts associated with

the advertisements that are played.

28. (Canceled).

29. (Canceled).

30. (Original) The system of claim 22 further comprising:

a database accessible by the content server for storing criteria defined by

the user for selecting which of the advertisements are to be played; and

wherein the content server provides advertisements according to the defined criteria.

31. (Original) The system of claim 22 wherein the value awarded to the user depends on the manner in which the advertisements are played.

32. (Original) The system of claim 22 wherein the content server further comprises:

a stream scheduler process for determining which content and advertisements are to be provided to the user;

a stream serving process for combining the content and the advertisements into a single programming stream and transmitting the single programming stream to the user via a computer network;

a client interaction process for determining which of the advertisements are played, wherein the stream scheduler process further collects statistics on which advertisements are played;

a billing cache for awarding value to the user according to which of the advertisements are played; and

a statistics database for storing the statistics collected for the user.

33. (Original) The system of claim 32 further comprising:

a statistical analysis engine for targeting the advertisements provided to the user based on the statistics collected for the user.

34. (Original) The system of claim 32 wherein the statistical analysis engine further:

clusters the user into a group of users according to the statistics collected for the user; and

targets the advertisements provided to the user based on the group into which the user is clustered.

35. (Original) The system of claim 32 wherein the statistical analysis engine further:

clusters the user into a demographic group according to the statistics collected for the user; and

targets the advertisements provided to the user based on the demographic group into which the user is clustered.

36. (Original) The system of claim 32 wherein the value awarded to the user depends on a relationship between the advertisements played and the statistics collected.

37. – 64. (Canceled).

65. (New) A method for providing interactive advertising comprising:

receiving video programming content and advertisements;

displaying to a viewer at least a portion of the received video programming content;

automatically displaying to the viewer at least one of the received advertisements in addition to the displayed video programming content;

receiving after a first amount of time a request from the viewer to stop displaying the displayed advertisement;

responsive to the received request, stopping the display of the advertisement; and

responsive to the first amount of time exceeding a threshold amount of

time associated with the advertisement, awarding value to the viewer.

66. (New) The method of claim 65 wherein the received video programming has an associated cost to the viewer, and awarding value to the viewer further comprises crediting the viewer for at least a portion of the cost.

67. (New) The method of claim 65 further comprising:

automatically displaying to the viewer for a second amount of time a second advertisement in addition to the displayed video programming content and the first advertisement;

responsive to the second amount of time exceeding a threshold amount of time associated with the second advertisement, awarding value to the viewer.

68. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the second advertisement is targeted to the viewer according to the viewer's usage history.

69. (New) The method of claim 68 wherein the viewer's usage history includes data describing which advertisements have previously been skipped by the viewer.

70. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the second advertisement is targeted to the viewer according to the viewer's demographics.

71. (New) The method of claim 67 further comprising receiving a request from the viewer to stop the display of the second advertisement; and

responsive to receiving the request, stopping the display of the second advertisement.

72. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein each advertisement has an associated value, and awarding value to the viewer includes awarding the value associated with each advertisement displayed to the viewer for at least an associated threshold amount of time.

73. (New) The method of claim 65 wherein the received video programming content is displayed to the viewer in response to a request from the viewer for the content.

74. (New) The method of claim 65 wherein receiving video programming content further comprises receiving a video stream over a network.

75. (New) The method of claim 65 wherein receiving video programming content further comprises receiving a physical medium including the content.

76. (New) The method of claim 75 wherein receiving advertisements further comprises receiving advertisements over a network.

77. (New) The method of claim 65 wherein the value awarded to the viewer depends at least in part on the time of day at which the advertisement is displayed.

78. (New) A method for providing interactive advertising comprising:
receiving video programming content and advertisements;
displaying to a viewer at least a portion of the received video
    programming content;
automatically displaying to the viewer at least one of the received
    advertisements in addition to the displayed video programming

content; and

responsive to the advertisement being displayed for at least a first threshold amount of time, awarding value to the viewer.

79. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein the received video programming has an associated cost to the viewer, and awarding value to the viewer further comprises crediting the viewer for at least a portion of the cost.

80. (New) The method of claim 78 further comprising:
automatically displaying to the viewer a second advertisement;
responsive to the second advertisement being displayed for at least a second threshold amount of time, awarding value to the viewer.

81. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein the first threshold amount of time is determined according to the advertisement displayed.

82. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein receiving video programming content further comprises receiving a video stream over a network.

83. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein receiving video programming content further comprises receiving a physical medium including the content.

84. (New) The method of claim 83 wherein receiving advertisements further comprises receiving advertisements over a network.

85. (New) A system for providing interactive advertising comprising:
first receiving means for receiving video programming content and advertisements;

first displaying means, coupled to the first receiving means, for displaying
to a viewer at least a portion of the received video programming
content;

second displaying means, coupled to the first displaying means, for
automatically displaying to the viewer at least one of the received
advertisements in addition to the displayed video programming
content;

second receiving means, coupled to the second displaying means, for
receiving after a first amount of time a request from the viewer to stop
displaying the displayed advertisement,

wherein responsive to the received request, the second displaying means
is further adapted to stop the display of the advertisement; and

awarding means, coupled to the second displaying means, for responsive
to the first amount of time exceeding a threshold amount of time
associated with the advertisement, awarding value to the viewer.